

Draft Environmental Assessment

MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS



Looking southwest at Meadow Lake FAS from the east entrance.

December 2002



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

Meadow Lake Fishing Access Site Improvements Draft Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

Draft

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Gravel one entrance road and improve interior road with a gravel cul-de-sac end; construct camp spurs (9) and day use parking (6) including accessible facilities; relocate sealed vault latrine; install picnic tables, fire rings, rock road barriers, self-pay fee station, interior regulatory and interpretive signs. Reclaim sections of existing two-track road.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished. Section 23-1-105 authorizes FWP to levy and collect fees for the use of privileges and conveniences (in this case, fees would be charged only for overnight camping). The opportunity for public involvement regarding the proposed project is provided under MCA 23-1-110.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued PPL Montana (formerly Montana Power Company) a license to operate the Missouri-Madison Hydroelectric Project No. 2188 in September 2000. Article 426 of the license outlines provisions for recreation management within Project No. 2188. This project is an effort to meet those licensing requirements. A property easement and cooperative management agreement would be implemented between PPL Montana and FWP for recreational use of and improvements placed on PPL Montana land between the FAS and Ennis Lake.

A three-way agreement would be negotiated between PPL Montana, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and FWP for the use of PPL Montana operations and maintenance funds in the Ennis Lake and Upper Bear Trap Canyon recreation areas.

3. **Name of project:** Meadow Lake Fishing Access Site Improvements
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):**
Co-sponsored by Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)
and
PPL Montana, 45 Basin Creek Road, Butte, MT 59701; represented by American Public Land Exchange, 125 Bank Street, #610, Missoula, MT 59802, 406-728-4176.

5. If applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2003

Estimated Completion Date: December 31, 2003

Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 50%

6. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):

Meadow Lake FAS can be accessed by traveling 6 miles north of Ennis on U.S. Highway 287 to McAllister (milepost 55), then two miles east on the North Ennis Lake county road to Ennis Lake. The 5.52-acre tract is located in Madison County, Montana; Township 4 South, Range 1 West, Section 34.

7. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
		Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>4</u>	Dry cropland	<u>0</u>
		Forestry	<u>0</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>0</u>	Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

8. Map/site plan: Attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

Please refer to Appendix B Location Map in and the Site Plan in Appendix C.

9. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) **Permits:** permits will be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
County Weed Board	weed permit
County Sanitarian	sealed vault septic system permit
County Road Department	site approach and road signs

(b) Funding:

(Note that PPL Montana amounts will be adjusted for inflation to current year dollars.)

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
PPL Montana (contribution in 1992 dollars)	\$150,000
FWP (Fishing Access Site Protection Account FY04-05)	\$ 30,000
Total	\$180,000

Approximate amount of total into FERC 2188 Trust Account \$97,000
for future maintenance and capital as directed in the
Missouri-Madison Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
PPL Montana	development approval to meet FERC license requirements managing agreement for facilities on PPL Montana property
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	regulatory agency
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	cultural site protection

10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

FWP proposes to cooperate with PPL Montana in the design, development, funding and management of a campground at Meadow Lake FAS in accordance with a hydroelectric re-licensing agreement and the Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan developed in conjunction with FERC relicensing. The primary purpose of this project is to help protect, mitigate and enhance the recreational resources, particularly the camping opportunities, in the Ennis Lake area.

The following components are specifically proposed at Meadow Lake FAS (refer to the Site Plan in Appendix C):

- establish one gravel entrance road, block and reclaim existing entrance at northwest side of property;
- improve interior roads using a culdesac end and rock road barriers to protect the site;
- reclaim sections of existing two-track road not utilized in new improvements;
- construct nine (9) camp spurs at edge of riparian growth including one site to accommodate campers with disabilities;
- establish six (6) designated day use parking stalls including accessible facilities;
- relocate the existing sealed vault latrine closer to the center of the site;
- install picnic tables and fire rings at each camp spur and several for day use;
- install interior regulatory and interpretive signs; and
- install self-pay fee station for overnight camping.

PPL Montana (formerly Montana Power Company) is mandated to develop recreation areas around Ennis Lake in accordance with Article 426 of the FERC Missouri-Madison Hydroelectric Project #2188 License. The relicensing process included development of the following items for recreation:

- Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan,
- Long-Term Funding Strategy to implement the Management Plan,
- Interagency Steering Committee and Regional Working Groups to oversee the Management Plan,
- Establishing a trust account to fund the annual operation and maintenance of recreation facilities.

In an effort to fulfill recreational needs identified in the above plans for the Ennis Lake area, camping facilities were first proposed at Klute's Landing (BLM site) on the western shore of Ennis Lake. This project, however, was abandoned after the environmental review process indicated a variety of negative impacts. Concerns arose about providing camping facilities near a cultural site and existing private RV facilities near Ennis, lack of historical overnight use here, the site's windy and unsheltered location and lack of a camping experience similar to Kobayashi Beach historical use which was converted to a day-use-only site in 2002 (*Environmental Assessment for Development of Ennis-area Recreation Sites*, prepared for PPL Montana and BLM, March 2001).

The Meadow Lake FAS provides an alternative site that addresses many of the above issues surrounding proposed camping facilities at BLM sites. Unlike Klute's Landing, Meadow Lake FAS is not a culturally significant site and has been traditionally used for overnight use. The surrounding vegetation and lower elevation provide a relatively sheltered area. This site can provide a similar camping experience to Kobayashi Beach given its proximity to the lakeshore and viewsheds, though it does lack the aesthetics of a sandy beach. Campsites will be further from the county road than at Kobayashi Beach; campers will have low dust and vehicle noise. Distance and vegetation between individual sites will offer privacy for campers.

The public will continue to use Meadow Lake FAS site for traditional activities: camping, waterfowl hunting, lake access and walk-in small boat launching, watchable wildlife viewing and picnicking. The only facility is a sealed vault latrine on the northeast end of the site. Vehicle travel is currently unrestricted, thus popular access points are void of vegetation and hard packed. A two-track road meanders through the site with access to the county road on the east and west ends of the property. Visitors will continue packing out their garbage; "pack in/pack out" signs will be posted at the site.

Fees would be charged for overnight camping after the proposed construction to help defray costs associated with managing the renovated site and slightly higher visitation.

Shallow water depths and aquatic vegetation do not encourage water recreation such as motorized boating or swimming off the proposed campground shore; no boat launch is provided here. Visitors can launch at the BLM Kobayashi Beach day-use area approximately 1.5 miles east on the county road or at Klute's Landing recreation site on the southwest shore of Ennis Lake. Because of past camping with motorized boating use at

Kabayashi Beach, it is expected that visitors will continue this use at Meadow Lake to some extent. Small boats and personal watercraft could use the bay even when water levels are low.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Parks Division

Wildlife Division

Fisheries Division

Design & Construction Bureau

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

PPL Montana

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				1a.
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		yes	1b.
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				1c.
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X		yes	1d.
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The proposed site alterations will primarily move surface soils, with no resulting changes to long-term soil stability or geologic substructure. The relocation of the sealed vault toilet will include filling the old location and excavating a new hole for sealed vault placement. In both cases, the holes will be filled, eliminating the potential for soil movement on this gently sloping tract.

2a. Construction of campsite spurs, day-use parking, and interior roads will increase disruption, displacement, compaction and over-covering of soils. This hardening of the site will reduce total vegetative productivity. Impacts will be mitigated by planting a grass mix in areas disrupted during construction. Sections of the existing two-track road through the site will be reclaimed with the same grass mix. The reestablished vegetation will reduce future erosion and moisture loss. The site plan purposefully utilizes land that has been disturbed in the past by unfettered visitor traffic, which illustrates areas of high public use. Rock road barriers will eliminate future vehicle traffic off designated routes, thus localizing use and allowing high fertility and production on the remainder of the site.

1c. There are no unique geologic or physical features in the area proposed for construction.

1d. This project will not directly modify the Ennis Lake shoreline; project components are approximately 25 feet from the shoreline or more. Silt fences will be used during construction to

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reduce the possibility of siltation into Ennis Lake due to precipitation events during and immediately after construction.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).)			X			2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)		X				
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions will be created by equipment during improvements of the entrance road, interior roads, parking areas and camp spurs. Camper visitation is expected to slightly increase at this site following the completion of construction. Visitors with camping units often travel at slower speeds than standard traffic; therefore, dust from travel on the adjacent county road is not expected to greatly increase. Smoke from campfires may produce temporary air pollution during periods of high visitation and low air movement.

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3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		yes	3a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		yes	3b.
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				3l.
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. Use of silt fencing will reduce potential erosion from road related construction entering the lake should rainfall cause a runoff event. Construction will be approximately 25 feet from the lakeshore at the nearest point.

3b. Gravel road base will limit runoff. Planting grass mix in disturbed areas will reduce future runoff and erosion.

3l. Ennis Lake elevations are controlled by Madison Dam in Bear Trap Canyon; the natural floodplain does not apply due to the reservoir impoundment. Hence, this area is not mapped by the Federal

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Emergency Management Agency (Federal Insurance Rate Maps) for potential flood hazards and floodplain regulations do not apply to this area.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		yes	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				4c.
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		yes	4e.
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. The 5.5-acre FAS is primarily a mixed grassland. The majority of the camp spurs will be on PPL Montana property between the FWP land and the lakeshore on grasslands previously disturbed by vehicle traffic and heavy public use. The outskirts of the campground and lakeshore consists of well established willows. Construction will utilize existing use areas already void of vegetation where possible, but slightly reduce the grassland abundance. The willow population will be retained. Disturbed areas will be seeded with a hearty native grass mix to revegetate the area as much as possible. Road barriers will limit off-road travel, thus reducing impacts to vegetation by unrestricted vehicle travel.

4c. A database search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program did not reveal plant species of concern in the vicinity of the proposed project.

4e. Construction and additional traffic tend to increase the possibility of noxious weeds becoming established. Seeding of disrupted soils after construction limits the potential for additional weed infestation by providing competition from a mix of hearty grasses. FWP staff will closely monitor the site after construction and weeds will be eradicated under the guidelines of the FWP Region 3 Weed Management Plan and the County Weed District.

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** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?			X		yes	5a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X		yes	See comment 5a. below
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?			X		yes	See comment 5a. & 5f. below
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		yes	See comment 5a. below
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)			X		yes	See comment 5a. below
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

The 5.5 acres owned by FWP does not offer highly valued wildlife habitat alone, but it does help buffer thicker riparian habitat provided in PPL Montana land along the lake and adjacent, undeveloped property to the west. The area supports waterfowl, raptors, small mammals such as rabbit, skunks, and mice, a few deer and aquatic species. Bald eagles (federally listed as threatened) use the area during migration and nesting, though the nearest nest is approximately 2 miles away at the south end of Ennis Lake. Trumpeter swans (species of concern in Montana) use the lake when migrating. (*Environmental Assessment for Development of Ennis-area Recreation Sites*, prepared for PPL Montana and BLM, March 2001)

FWP Fisheries Biologist Pat Byorth stated that the fish community of Ennis Lake is comprised of rainbow trout, brown trout, mountain whitefish and Arctic grayling as sport fish, and Utah chub and white suckers, which are predominant (written communication December 4, 2002). FWP Fisheries Biologist Pat Clancey anticipates that the project construction is unlikely to directly impact fish habitat; however, the motorized watercraft use often associated with camping on a lakeshore will disturb use

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of this area by juvenile Arctic grayling and other game and nongame fish. FWP monitors the Meadow Lake bay annually for juvenile grayling and about half of the last 10 years they have found significant numbers of juvenile fish. Because grayling rear along the shoreline, it is possible that if personal watercraft use increases, grayling recruitment may decline. (Personal communication November 25, 2002 and written communication December 4, 2002.)

FWP Wildlife Biologist Kurt Alt expects few impacts to wildlife due to the proposed project. Direct impacts to habitat will be minimal in the grasslands. Ennis Lake is a major flyway for trumpeter swans, geese, and many species of ducks. No impacts are anticipated to nesting bald eagles at the south end of the lake. Waterfowl hunting can continue. (Personal communication November 25, 2002.) Eared and horned grebes nest in aquatic vegetation in Meadow Creek Bay and may be disturbed by increased visitation and watercraft usage (Pat Byorth written communication December 4, 2002).

Regulating the use of boats in Meadow Creek bay may be necessary to mitigate the impacts to fish and wildlife rearing. If boat restrictions are pursued, this would be a separate process and would likely require FWP Commission approval.

5a. The physical construction of the site improvements are not expected to have major impacts to fish or wildlife habitat. As Fisheries Biologist Pat Clancey described above, the associated potential increase in personal watercraft or motorized boating in this bay could alter the recruitment of Arctic grayling, a candidate for listing as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Threatened and Endangered Species, which use the bay for rearing. FWP seines Meadow Creek bay each year. If motorized boat use increases and juvenile grayling or other fish species numbers decline significantly, then methods of limiting boat numbers, speeds, shoreline mooring, or general use of the bay may be explored to reduce disturbance.

5c. A small amount of small mammal habitat will be lost from the proposed road construction and loss of grasslands. All disturbed areas will be reclaimed with a similar grass mix to encourage return of this habitat type.

5f. A database search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified three additional Montana species of concern within a four-mile radius, which are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed project: trumpeter swan, ferruginous hawk and an agapetus caddisfly (*Agapetus montanus*). Previous use of the site, lack of critical habitat on this tract, and the distance of the camping area from the primary use area of these species makes the risk of disturbance very low.

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B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Noise levels would increase during construction due to the operation of construction equipment. Following site construction, an increase in human and vehicle noise, which may be a nuisance to adjacent residents, may occur with the anticipated slight increase in seasonal overnight camping use at the site. Increased motorized boating in this bay will increase noise levels, as well. Standard fishing access site regulations establish quiet hours from 10pm to 8am. FWP staff will patrol the area and work with law enforcement personnel from other agencies to discourage or correct inappropriate noise levels.

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7. <u>LAND USE</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?			X positive			7c.
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7c. The issuance of the FERC #2188 License and FERC approval of the Recreation Plan mandates the creation of camping opportunities along Ennis Lake. The existence of PPL Montana land along the shoreline of Ennis Lake and adjacent the Meadow Lake FAS provides land for this recreation use.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		yes	8a.
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)			X		yes	See comment 8a. below
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. Chemical spray is part of the FWP weed management program, as well as biological and mechanical methods. Weed treatment would be conducted only by trained personnel under guidelines in the FWP Region 3 Weed Management Plan.

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9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?			X		yes	9a.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X positive			9e.
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9a. A slight increase in overnight camping is expected at the FAS during the peak recreation period (summer) due to the loss of overnight camping opportunities at Kobayashi Beach. The overall visitation to the northern end of Ennis Lake is not expected to increase. The purpose of this project is to provide additional camping opportunities to fill a void in that type of recreation opportunity. Because the FAS does not provide boat launching facilities or nice beach surface, the increased use will be focused on camping activities. Campers who use the site now would be displaced during the approximately 3-month construction period. FWP would attempt to complete construction during a low use period, such as fall or spring, to reduce the number of users impacted. The increase in use of this area will be limited by the facilities provided and road restrictions within the site.

9e. Traffic hazards are expected to decline by eliminating an access off the county road to the site. One access point is safer than the current two road intersections. Interior traffic patterns will be improved with designated routes, camp spurs, and parking areas.

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10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: recreation, litter & sewage disposal			X		yes	10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						10e.
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						10f.
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. Improved facilities at the FAS will require additional maintenance by FWP State Parks staff, including cleaning, repair, fee compliance, litter pick-up, weed management and vault latrine pumping. An increase in overnight use will slightly increase the amount of litter on the site, though users are requested to pack out trash. Windy conditions will spread some litter to vegetation, adjacent residential yards, and the lake. A FAS Caretaker will be assigned to help manage this site and complete the above tasks. Contracted services may also conduct these activities under guidance from the Region 3 FWP staff. Costs will be offset by fees collected at the site and PPL Montana funds allocated for this purpose.

10e. PPL Montana has allocated \$150,000 (1992 dollar values which will be adjusted for inflation) toward the proposed improvements in a "challenge cost share" program, which requires funds for development, design are shared with FWP. FWP proposes to add \$30,000 from the FAS protection account for project development. The funding match contributed by FWP fishing license funds would allow PPL Montana to place excess development funds into a trust fund of which interest earnings would fund future development and maintenance of recreation projects throughout the Missouri-Madison corridor. Given the preliminary cost estimates below, approximately \$87,000 would be deposited into the trust account based on 1992 dollar figures.

Preliminary Cost Estimate

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Meadow Lake FAS

Road 20' wide x 1250 lf	\$25,000
Camp spurs 8 @ 45'x14'	\$5,040
Parking 2880 sf	\$2,880
Picnic tables 12	\$4,800
Fire rings 9	\$1,800
Bulletin board	\$1,500
Fee station and signs	\$2,000
Relocate Vault toilet	\$2,000
Reclaim old roadway 760 lf	\$2,280
Barriers 2,850 lf 8'oc @ \$75 ea	\$26,718
Accessible parking and path 440 sf @ \$7sf	\$3,080
Accessible camp parking and pad 1,040 sf @ \$7	\$7,280
	<hr/>
Subtotal	\$84,378
Contingency 10%	\$8,437
Total	\$92,815

10f. FWP operation and maintenance costs will be supplemented with a portion of \$35,000 (in 1992 dollars to be adjusted for inflation) from PPL Montana as will be negotiated in a three-party cooperative agreement between BLM, PPL Montana and FWP. This funding will be used for recreation management responsibilities borne by these agencies on Ennis Lake and in the Upper Bear Trap Canyon. Maintenance at the Meadow Lake FAS is expected to cost approximately \$2-5,000 annually to cover fencing, cleaning, toilet pumping, fee system administration, litter removal, caretaker activities.

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		yes	11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Tourism Report attached as Appendix D.)			X positive			11c.
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This site offers a grassland viewshed with willows providing relief along the lakeshore. The site is bisected by a heavily traveled two-track road and packed vegetation from parking vehicles along the shoreline. The area is gradually sloping from the county road south toward the lakeshore. The north shore of the lake has several areas popular for day-use and overnight recreation. The focus for these activities is now changing with day use primarily occurring at Kobayashi Beach and camping at Meadow Lake FAS to best utilize the benefits of each site.

11a. Except for the two existing entrances, the existing two-track interior road is not readily discernable to people passing on the county road due to the area topography. The improved road system with rock barriers will be slightly more visible. The adjacent homes are above the site and will be in full view of the site improvements. When in use, the camping units will be quite visible. The rustic, primitive appearance of the site with an occasional camping unit will change to a more refined, formal campground. The impacts of the proposed construction will be mitigated by reclaiming the old two-track road, using gravel surfaces and rock barriers, rather than paved surfaces or other manufactured barriers.

11c. The primitive atmosphere that Meadow Lake FAS currently offers campers will be somewhat compromised. The proposed project slightly increases the number of public camping units around Ennis Lake in accordance with the FERC License #2188. This project replaces a few units lost when Kobayashi Beach changed to a day-use area. The quality of camping is improved with added space between units (compared to those at Kobayashi Beach), level pads and maneuverability for RV units. Please refer to the Tourism Report from the Department of Commerce in Appendix D.

	IMPACT *	Can Impact	
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* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES						
Will the proposed action result in:	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant	Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				12a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a.)		X				See comment 12a. below
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. PPL Montana hired a consultant to conduct a cultural survey at the site which produced negative results. FWP consulted with SHPO and SHPO concurred that the proposed project would have a low likelihood of impacting cultural resources (please refer to Appendix E).

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X positive			13a.
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?			X positive			13c.
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?			X			13d.
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.			X			See page 2, #9

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13a. Although this assessment reviews only the Meadow Lake FAS project, this project is an important component of the overall Ennis Lake recreational opportunities. BLM intended to develop camping at their sites; however, when this was not a favorable alternative at Klute's Landing or other areas, this aspect of recreation was not fulfilled. Improving Meadow Lake FAS to accommodate camping fills this void for public camping facilities in the Ennis Lake area.

13c. Providing camping facilities at Meadow Lake FAS complies with Article 426 of the FERC Missouri-Madison hydroelectric Project #2188 License. PPL Montana is required to enhance recreation in the Missouri-Madison corridor as directed in Article 426 and the Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan. If this project is not completed, PPL Montana would not be in compliance with the License requirement for recreation improvements at Meadow Lake FAS and would have to create camping facilities elsewhere.

13d. If this project is not completed, it is possible that an undisturbed area of PPL Montana land would be developed along the lakeshore with higher environmental impacts than assessed at Meadow Lake FAS. Meadow Lake FAS has an established camping use and is in the same vicinity

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

as camping previously provided at Kobayashi Beach. Environmental impacts of the proposed project are few and minor, several of which can be mitigated.

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)

- 2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Alternative A: No Action

No construction would occur at Meadow Lake FAS under Alternative A. Primitive camping would continue at no charge. The site would probably experience more overnight use due to the elimination of overnight camping at Kobayashi Beach. This increased visitation would further damage the site's environment due to unrestricted travel routes, lack of designated campsites and lack of site protective measures.

The re-licensing process involved recreational surveys, public comment and recreational planning by a multi-faceted team. These sources indicated a need for more overnight facilities in the Ennis Lake area. If the No Action alternative is chosen, PPL Montana would explore placing camping facilities in other areas in order to comply with the License Agreement.

Alternative B: Day Use Only

Under this alternative, no site alterations would occur and no camping would be allowed at the Meadow Lake FAS. This would increase the demand for overnight facilities in the Ennis Lake area, since Kobayashi Beach recently eliminated camping and this decision would no longer offer overnight use at Meadow Lake. It is anticipated that substantial public debate would arise with the elimination of camping at this site.

As with Alternative A, PPL Montana would explore placing camping facilities in other areas along or near Ennis Lake to comply with their License Agreement.

Preferred Alternative C: Proposed Action

The proposed action disperses camping to provide privacy and increased recreational opportunities while protecting the site from indiscriminate recreational use. Visitation is expected to slightly increase due to other changes in area recreation opportunities. This project replaces lost camping facilities in the Ennis Lake area and helps PPL Montana to comply with the Recreation Plan and FERC License requirements.

The proposed project would be completed by a private contractor offering the lowest competitive bid, and would be constructed to state requirements. FWP Design and Construction Bureau would administer the project.

Alternative D: Provide Camping with a High Level of Development

Alternative D would provide about the same number of camping and day use facilities as proposed, however, with paved surfaces, and flush restroom facilities. The need for this level of camping experience has not been demonstrated through recreational surveys or the Missouri-Madison recreation management planning process. Environmental and human impacts would be slightly higher, specifically relating to site drainage/runoff and aesthetics. Costs to develop and maintain these facilities would be higher. In addition, this

level of development may be perceived as competition with the private commercial market providing camping facilities in the McAllister and Ennis areas.

This project would be accomplished by a private contractor offering the lowest competitive bid. Construction must meet state requirements and the project would be administered by FWP Design and Construction Bureau.

Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

A boat ramp at this site is not a feasible alternative due to the shallow water depths and lack of gradient to provide adequate launching slopes. In addition, the BLM has recently improved boat launching facilities at Kobayashi Beach and Klute's Landing; visitation levels do not indicate that a third boat ramp in this vicinity is necessary at this time

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

FWP standard construction procedures include scarifying and seeding areas immediately around the construction zones that were disturbed to reduce erosion, weed infestation and moisture loss. In addition, the existing two-track road will be scarified and seeded to encourage reclamation. Site design uses the existing road route as much as possible and leaves as much existing vegetation as possible. Silt fences also reduce the chance of turbidity or siltation when working near water bodies.

FWP may pursue restrictions to motorized boating in the bay area if boat use associated with the improved FAS increases to the degree that it impacts fish or waterfowl species rearing habitat and recruitment.

Region 3 utilizes their Weed Management Program in cooperation with the county Weed Supervisor. Chemical application is done by a trained technician to reduce risks of spillage or incorrect use.

FAS regulations signs will be posted on the site to help enforce quiet hours on overnight users and reduce noise.

Natural road barriers and gravel road surfaces will aid in the new project blending with its surroundings.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The Preferred (proposed) Alternative C is part of a group of efforts to provide adequate facilities as determined by public process for public recreation and resource protection. If the site does not undergo some site protection measures, the anticipated increase in unrestricted camping may significantly impact the environmental resources in the form of new roads, uncontrolled camp fires, overuse of certain areas. Conversely, if the site is over-developed, the negative aesthetic impacts to the area residents would be higher and the anticipated amount of visitation does not warrant this level of site protection or the higher costs for construction and maintenance.

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment. The proposed design utilizes areas previously disturbed; therefore, only minor impacts will occur to the vegetation during construction. Most of the minor impacts can be mitigated. No unique geological or physical features will be affected. The proposed improvements will enhance camping opportunities in the Ennis Lake area.

Though Ennis Lake is used by a tremendous number of migrating birds, some of which are species of concern, impacts to these species are not expected. The project construction does not pose direct impacts to Arctic grayling or other fish species; however, potential indirect impacts may occur if motorized watercraft use associated with campground users increases in the bay area. Similarly, impacts to nesting grebes may occur with increased motorized watercraft use. The lack of launching facilities, shallow water depths, and aquatic vegetation in the bay will help limit motorized use. Juvenile fish production in the mouth of Meadow Creek and along the lake shorelines will continue to be monitored by FWP. If boating use increases and juvenile fish species numbers decline, FWP can suggest methods of restricting use in the bay area to the FWP Commission to protect the grayling and other populations.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA and NEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The FERC license process and development of the Comprehensive Recreation Management Plan involved many people from the public and a variety of agencies at all levels to determine the recreational needs in the Madison valley. This proposal is based on comments and suggestions received from those working groups.

The public will also be notified in the following manners to comment on the Draft EA, the proposed action and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *The Madisonian (Ennis)*, *Bozeman Chronicle*, and the *Helena Independent Record*;
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.state.mt.us>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties for review and to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

3. Duration of comment period.

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Friday, January 24, 2003 and can be mailed to the address below:

Meadow Lake FAS Improvements Draft EA
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or e-mailed to: gwalker@montana.edu

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Sue Dalbey
Independent Contractor
Dalbey Resources
926 N. Lamborn St.
Helena, MT 59601
406-443-8058

Jerry Walker
Regional State Park Manager
FWP Region 3
1400 South 19th
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-994-4042

APPENDICES

- A. 23-1-110 MCA Qualification Checklist
- B. Site Location Map
- C. Site Plan
- D. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- E. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office

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APPENDIX A
23-1-110 MCA PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST
MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Date: November 25, 2002

Person Reviewing: Sue Dalbey, consultant
Dalbey Resources

Project Location: Meadow Lake FAS can be accessed by traveling 6 miles north of Ennis on U.S. Highway 287 to McAllister (milepost 55), then two miles east on the North Ennis Lake county road to Ennis Lake. The 5.52-acre tract is located in Madison County, Montana; Township 4 South, Range 1 West, Section 34.

Description of Proposed Work: Gravel one entrance road and improve interior road with a gravel cul-de-sac end; construct camp spurs (9) and day use parking (6) including accessible facilities; relocate sealed vault latrine; install picnic tables, fire rings, rock road barriers, self-pay fee station, interior regulatory and interpretive signs. Reclaim sections of existing two-track road.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ☒ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

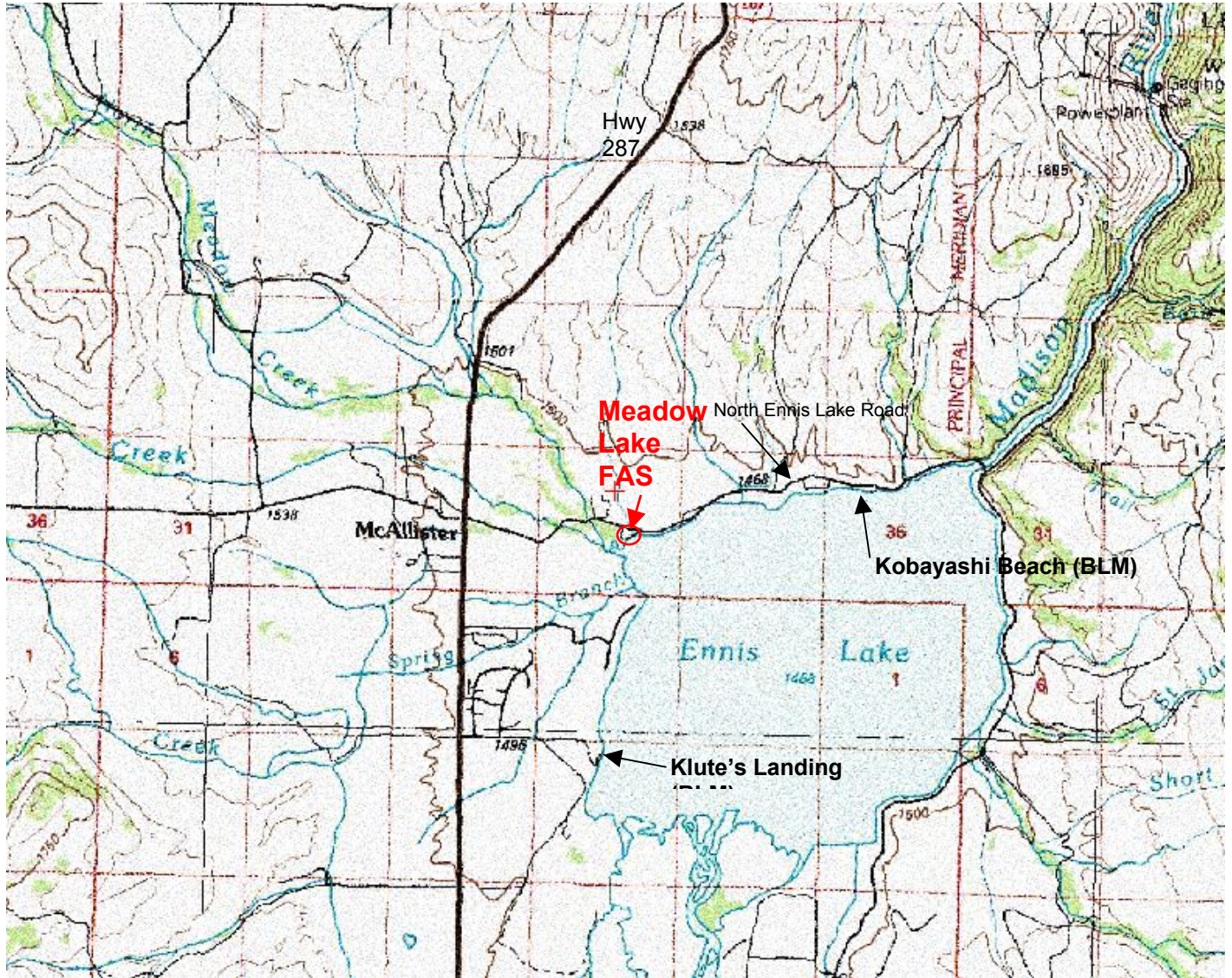
- ☒ A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: *Parts of the road and camp spurs will disturb grasslands. Many areas proposed for construction have been disturbed from unrestricted vehicle travel.*
- ☐ B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: *No new building construction.*
- ☒ C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: *Grading of roads, parking, sidewalk, will require cut and fill of more than 20 c.y.*
- ☒ D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: *The site is currently open for undesignated parking and camping. Approximately 6 standard vehicle parking stalls and nine recreational vehicle parking spurs will be provided by the proposed project.*
- ☐ E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: *No shoreline alterations are proposed.*
- ☐ F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: *None*

- [] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: *A private consultant hired by PPL Montana surveyed the site for cultural and historic sites with negative results. FWP consulted with SHPO who agreed that the likelihood of disturbing cultural sites is low.*
- [] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: *None*
- [✓] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: *This site is currently open for unlimited, undesignated, primitive camping. This project proposes to limit camping to nine designated sites.*
- [✓] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: *All existing uses will continue. Camp sites will be designated in an effort to replace camping opportunities in the area which were eliminated.*

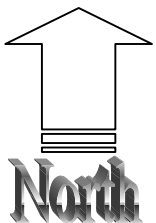
If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX B
SITE LOCATION MAP
MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS
Madison County, T4S R1W Section 34

To Norris



To Ennis



Base map USGS Quadrangle Ennis Lake

**APPENDIX C
SITE PLAN
MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

PDF FILE

**APPENDIX D
TOURISM REPORT
MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

PENDING
HARD COPY ONLY

APPENDIX E
CLEARANCE LETTER – STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICE
MEADOW LAKE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS

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